

Contributed

A CHILD'S PETITION.

Oh, fill me with the knowledge of thy will
 This day, my Father;
 That thus thy blessed purpose I may fill
 And walk in wisdom's way.
 Oh, let me be well pleasing unto thee
 To-day, my Father;
 Nor may I ever grieve the Christ who died
 And rose for me,
 Nor from him go astray.

Fruitful may I be, in lowliest deeds
 Of mercy and of love;
 And, as my earthly hours so swiftly flee,
 As shadows of the night,
 Oh, may I learn to know thee well, my God!
 Treading the upward path
 That holy men of old have trod—
 That upward, "shining way,
 That shineth more and more
 Unto the perfect day."

—Katharine Lampton Paxson.

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HOW CAN THE MINISTRY BE RECRUITED?

By Rev. A. M. Fraser, D. D.

Christ gives us one answer to this question in most unmistakable language. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." What a profound satisfaction it is to have any one duty and opportunity of life defined for us so clearly and with so much certainty! How violent, almost explosive, is the response of the Lord foreshadowed in that command! "He will send forth laborers." Some read it "He will thrust forth laborers," and some read it more strongly yet, "He will hurl forth laborers." It was so he forced out Moses from his seclusion, and Gideon from his hiding, and Jeremiah from his diffidence. If we need anything to fortify the Word of the Lord, the actual experience of the Church supplies it. Whenever the number of candidates runs low, we become alarmed, and the springs of prayer are started all over the Church. At once the number begins to increase. But do we not too easily become satisfied and restrain prayer and allow the number to recede again?

But not only should we pray a general prayer of that sort, that the Lord would send forth laborers, we may make specific prayers for individuals, that the Lord would send forth particular persons to become laborers in the harvest. It must be confessed that the warrant for this in the Bible is not so explicit. But there can only be one objection raised to it and that objection is raised. The objection is that it is the prerogative of God to call men into the ministry, and it is a piece of presumption on the part of one man to ask God to put another into the ministry, when he does not know that God has called him. There are two answers to the objection:

First, the same sort of an argument would prove that we ought not to pray for the conversion of any individual. Conversion is the prerogative of God, for none but God can convert a soul. And God himself effects or chooses the individuals who are to be con-

verted, but that does not prevent one praying for the conversion of any individual.

Second. Whatever it is we pray for, we ought to say, "If it be thy holy will." If, therefore, we pray that some particular young man friend of ours may become a minister and always add, "If it be thy holy will," we have not trespassed upon any ground that God has reserved exclusively for himself.

Here again a gracious experience comes to strengthen our conclusion. How many ministers there are today and how many there have been in all generations of the Church who have been dedicated to the ministry from their birth! Take a few concrete cases. A young man went home from a missionary meeting with a great hope and a great joy contending for mastery in his heart. His hope was that he might be honored of God to be a worker in the foreign field. His fear was that it might break his mother's heart, for he was "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Imagine how hope and fear were forced into joy when the mother met his secret with a counter secret—she had dedicated him to missions in his infancy. For many years now the Lord has been putting the seal of his approval on his ministry in a foreign land.

Another youth returned to his home from a young people's missionary convention and reported to his mother that he had volunteered for mission work in Africa. He then learned for the first time that his mother had dedicated him to mission work in Africa when he was a babe in her arms.

The Missionary for October copies from the Baptist Missionary Magazine an incident from the life of Dr. Jacob Chamberlain that is the counterpart of these two. It is as follows: "At his birth, in 1835, his mother consecrated him her eldest son, to the work of Foreign Missions, so far as her influence should be able to accomplish it. Her son knew nothing of this and though he grew up with a deep interest in missions, did not offer himself for service until about the completion of his education."

We are all familiar with Dr. Paton's beautiful description of his father's place of prayer in their humble Scottish home, and his own belief that his thrilling life was rooted in his father's closet. It was not an accident that the parent's prayers coincided with the election of God in thus producing two of the most remarkable missionaries of this age.

But while much of the responsibility is in the hands of parents, it is not all there. The minister, the Sunday-school teacher, a consecrated elder or private member, man or woman, can do a great deal, by watching the youth of the Church, selecting particular ones as subjects of prayer, and by engaging the prayers of others to the same end.

Another way by which we can get candidates for the ministry is to follow up the prayers by a tactful and prayerful suggestion to the person. Parents can not do this so well, because the child has profound regard for the judgment and wishes of his parents that there is danger of his mistaking the parental suggestion for the call of God. But some one else may do it. A word